AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1.   (Currently amended) A method comprising:

determining, <u>by a vending machine and </u>based on profit management considerations, a subscription to at least one product available for sale by [[a]]<u>the</u> vending machine, the subscription including at least one term that defines at least one product which may be redeemed pursuant to the subscription;

outputting<u>, by the vending machine,</u> an offer to purchase the subscription;

receiving<u>, by the vending machine,</u> an indication of acceptance of the offer;

registering<u>, by the vending machine,</u> the subscription;

outputting<u>, by the vending machine,</u> a code<u> indicative of the subscription</u>; and

receiving<u>, by the vending machine,</u> the code and a request to redeem a unit of a product pursuant to the subscription.

2.   (Original) The method of claim 1, in which the at least one term that defines at least one product which may be redeemed pursuant to the subscription defines

a category of product, and

a number of units of products included in the category which may be redeemed.

3.   (Original) The method of claim 2, further comprising:

receiving a request to redeem a unit of a selected product pursuant to the subscription; and

determining whether the selected product is included in the category.

4.   (Original) The method of claim 2, further comprising:

defining the category by determining which of a set of all products available for sale are included in the category.

5.   (Original) The method of claim 2, further comprising:

outputting an indication of products which are included in the category.

6.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving from a customer a selection of a subscription of a plurality of subscriptions.

7.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving an indication of an amount of currency that is tendered to the vending machine;

determining whether the amount is greater than a predetermined threshold; and

performing the step of outputting an offer to purchase the subscription based on determining whether the amount is greater than a predetermined threshold.

8.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

generating [[a]]the code.

9.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 8, in which generating [[a]]the code comprises:

receiving a seven digit number from a customer via a keypad.

10.   (Original) The method of claim 8, further comprising:

storing the code in association with the subscription, thereby allowing the subscription to be determined from the code.

11.   (Original) The method of claim 1, in which determining a subscription based on profitability considerations comprises:

selecting a product from a plurality of products based on at least one of:

an actual sales rate of the selected product,

an ideal sales rate of the selected product,

a desired inventory level of the selected product.

12.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

determining that sales volume for the vending machine at a point in time exceeds a threshold; and

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determining a subscription including at least one term that defines a predetermined period of time for redemption.

13.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving, from a customer, a request to purchase [[a]]the subscription, the subscription being to a predetermined number of units of a product; and

calculating a price for the requested subscription based on profit management considerations.

14.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving the code;

receiving an indication of payment;

improving at least one term of the subscription.

15.   (Original) The method of claim 14, in which improving at least one term of the subscription comprises:

adjusting a term that defines a number of units of products which may be redeemed.

16.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

providing an offer to recharge the subscription.

17.   (Original) The method of claim 16, in which providing an offer to recharge the subscription comprises:

determining a number of units remaining for redemption on the subscription; and

providing an offer to recharge the subscription if the number of units remaining is less than a predetermined threshold.

18.   (Currently amended) A method comprising:

receiving, by a vending machine, an indication of a value of currency that is tendered to the vending machine;

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determining, by the vending machine, whether the value is greater than a predetermined threshold;

determining, by the vending machine, a subscription to at least one product available for sale by a vending machine, the subscription including at least one term that defines

a category of product, and

a number of units of products included in the category which may be redeemed;

outputting, by the vending machine, an offer to purchase the subscription based on determining whether the value is greater than a predetermined threshold[[.]];

receiving, by the vending machine, an indication of acceptance of the offer;

registering, by the vending machine, the subscription;

outputting, by the vending machine, a code indicative of the subscription; and

receiving, by the vending machine, the code;

receiving, by the vending machine, a request to redeem a unit of a selected product pursuant to the subscription;

determining, by the vending machine, whether the selected product is included in the category; and

dispensing, by the vending machine, the product if it is determined that the selected product is included in the category.

19.   (Original) The method of claim 18, further comprising:

receiving the code;

receiving an indication of payment;

improving at least one term of the subscription.

20.   (Original) The method of claim 19, in which improving at least one term of the subscription comprises:

adjusting a term that defines a number of units of products which may be redeemed.

21.   (Original) The method of claim 18, further comprising:

providing an offer to recharge the subscription.

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22.   (Currently amended) A method comprising:

    receiving a code via an input device of a vending machine;

    determining, by the vending machine, a subscription that correspond to the code, the subscription including at least one term that defines a number of units of products available for sale by [[a]]the vending machine, which number of units may be redeemed;

    determining, , by the vending machine and from the code, a financial account identifier;

    determining, by the vending machine, whether the number of units is below a predetermined threshold;

    extracting, by the vending machine, payment using the financial account identifier if the number of units is below a predetermined threshold; and

    increasing, by the vending machine, the number of units that may be redeemed if the number of units is below a predetermined threshold.

23.   (Original) The method of claim 22, in which the financial account identifier comprises a credit card number.

24.   (Original) The method of claim 22, further comprising:

    receiving an indication to activate automatic renewal.

25.   (Original) The method of claim 22, further comprising:

    determining whether an indication to activate automatic renewal has been received; and

    in which extracting payment using the financial account identifier if the number of units is below a predetermined threshold is performed only if an indication to activate automatic renewal has been received.